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NORTH KOREA: CARROTS NOW, STICKS LATER?

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I. Introduction

In Book One of Clausewitz's "On War", he writes, "In war the result is never final…The defeated state often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may be found in political conditions at some later date."[1] The state of relations between the United States and North Korea, also known as the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), embodies this truism today. An armistice agreement in 1953 provided for a cease-fire between North Korea and the United States, but the peace treaty to end the war has yet to be negotiated, leaving a large armed camp on either side of the 38th parallel warily eyeing each other for the past 49 years.

Since the signing of the Armistice, the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) has flourished into a stable democratic country with a healthy and powerful economy. At the same time, the DPRK, under a communist totalitarian regime, has grown evermore isolated and teeters on the edge of collapse. However, the DPRK's military, coupled with its development and export of missile technology and pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, threatens the stability of the entire region. The United States has declared this region an area of national interest and, therefore, must counter North Korea's actions to provide for stability in the region.

This paper will examine the nature of the relationship between the United States and the countries of the region to identify national objectives and formulate a national security and military strategy to achieve them.

II. Setting the Stage – Roadmap Towards a New Strategy

Near Confrontation and the 1994 Agreed Framework: In April 1994, the DPRK announced it was going to refuel the core of the 5 Megawatt –electric (MWe) reactor at

Yongbon. This core contained enough plutonium to build several nuclear weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), under the terms of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) signed by the DPRK in 1985, demanded to be present at the unloading to ensure none of the fuel was diverted. However, the North Koreans ignored the demand and began unloading the core without the IAEA present. As a result, the United States immediately broke off bilateral negotiations with North Korea and began efforts to impose sanctions through the United Nations Security Council. North Korea denounced the United States' move and declared that any sanctions resolution or imposition of sanctions would be considered an act of war.

As the United States prepared for possible military intervention, former President Jimmy Carter traveled to Pyongyang to meet with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung in an attempt to defuse the situation. Carter's efforts cleared the way for the high-level talks that would lead to the "Agreed Framework." The basic tenets of the framework called for the United States to lead efforts to provide two 1000 MWe light water reactors (LWR) to North Korea in exchange for their ceasing all actions concerning the refueling of the 5 MWe reactor and eventually dismantling it. Furthermore, the North Koreans agreed to dismantle its spent fuel reprocessing plant, not to reprocess plutonium from the fuel already unloaded from the Yongbon reactor, and to fully comply with all requirements and safeguards specified in the NPT.

The Clinton Approach: In early August 1998, North Korea announced plans to develop, test, and export ballistic missiles and then launched a Taepo-Dong 1 ballistic missile over Japan a few weeks later. This launch demonstrated that the North Korean missile program was much further along than originally thought and that the DPRK could

now strike anywhere within South Korea or Japan with a conventional or non-conventional warhead.[2] President Clinton now faced his second Korean crisis and reengaged with North Korea following the launch in an effort to halt the development and export of their missile program. The United States offered to end economic sanctions in return for cessation of missile development and export, an offer the North Koreans immediately rejected. In an effort to break the impasse, President Clinton appointed William Perry, former Secretary of Defense, to review the U.S.'s policy toward North Korea and provide recommendations for a viable policy to achieve the security objectives of the United States and its regional allies.

Perry would meet with the North Korean leadership, but prior to those meetings he established the Trilateral Coordination Oversight Group (TCOG) with Japan and South Korea in order to "institutionalize coordination of negotiating strategies among the three governments on North Korea policy issues."[3] Following his meetings with North Korean officials, Perry recommended the United States take a multilateral approach to engagement and pursue a gradual normalization of relations and elimination of sanctions provided North Korea agreed to give up its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. If North Korea refused to cooperate, Perry recommended that the United States, in coordination with Japan and South Korea (the TCOG), take steps to contain the threats by these programs.

The administration's engagement efforts led to an agreement by North Korea to temporarily suspend all long-range missile testing (until the end of 2003) and for the United States to lift the economic sanctions imposed in 1950 by the "Trading with the Enemy Act." More importantly, this agreement cleared the way for subsequent high-

level visits by Secretary of State Madeline Albright to Pyongyang, and by Jo Myong Rok, North Korean Vice Marshall, to Washington D.C. in October, 2000. The future of U.S. – North Korean relations appeared optimistic.

III. Domestic Environment - Bush Policy Toward North Korea

Shortly after President George W. Bush took office, his administration announced it would undertake a complete review of U.S. policy toward North Korea and halted all actions and bilateral discussions initiated only months earlier – a significant departure from the path of engagement the Clinton administration had taken. The Bush administration completed its review in June 2001 and announced it would pursue engagement, but the tone of the President's statement on North Korean policy issued from the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo on June 6, 2001 did not reflect the same vigor or enthusiasm demonstrated by the previous administration. President Bush declared, "I have directed my national security team to undertake serious discussions with North Korea on a broad agenda…We will pursue these discussions in the context of a comprehensive approach to North Korea…Our approach will offer North Korea the opportunity to demonstrate the seriousness of its desire for improved relations. If North Korea responds affirmatively and takes appropriate action, we will expand our efforts to help the North Korean people, ease sanctions, and take other political steps."[4] In essence, the Bush approach wiped the slate of negotiations clean and indicated to North Korea that the status quo achieved with the previous administration was not applicable.

Before the United States could initiate any significant dialogue with North Korea on what exactly the Bush administration was asking for, terrorists attacked the United States on September 11, 2001 and, when President Bush labeled the country a member of the

axis of evil in his State of the Union address the following January, the possibility of engagement of any kind with the DPRK government seemed doubtful. In numerous addresses following the attacks, President Bush has outlined the general form of United States policy for its national security and, with the recent publication of the National Security Strategy, he has made it clear that deterrence and intervention are now considered viable means for achieving national security objectives.

IV. International Environment – Opportunities and Constraints

North Korea: North Korea is a martial state, fielding the fifth largest army in the world; over 70 percent of its ground force, totaling just over one million ground troops, is stationed on or near the border with South Korea and North Korean artillery, numbering in the thousands, can strike Seoul from their positions.[5] This force, combined with their ballistic missiles, capable of delivering a 1000-kilogram warhead on U.S. forces in South Korea and Japan, provide North Korea a balance of military power in the region and constrains U.S. efforts to use coercion as a means to achieve its political objectives.[6]

Aside from its military and nuclear programs, the country lacks other means of national power. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the DPRK lost its largest trading partner and source of foreign aid, resulting in a near-total collapse of the North Korean economy. According to the most recent report from the U.S. State Department, the DPRK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) totals only $21.8 billion and per capita income is $900, approximately 1/13th of South Korea. Mining and manufacturing make up 60 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product, but account for nearly 100 percent of its exports in the form of machinery and equipment, military hardware and various minerals, metals, and steel.[7]

Although the DPRK economy has shown some growth in each of the last three years, this is attributed to assistance by foreign countries, not to systemic changes initiated by the North Korean government.[8] The government's centralized control of agriculture has failed and a large segment of the population is facing starvation. Flooding and other natural disasters, coupled with a lack of sufficient quantities of fertilizers, have exacerbated the agricultural crisis and North Korea is in desperate need of foreign aid to stave off widespread famine.[9]

These conditions, while dire for North Korea, offer significant opportunity for the United States and its allies to bring about substantive changes in that government's behavior and to improve regional stability. Signs that North Korea is ripe for change are evidenced by developments within the country over the past four months. The communist leadership has already altered some of its economic policies, taking the first step toward economic reform by removing price controls and raising wages. The government recently adopted legislation to establish a Chinese – style "special economic zone" on North Korea's border with China, a further indication that the North is ready to take bold steps to improve its economy.[10]

Additionally, North Korea has actively engaged diplomatically with South Korea and Japan in an attempt to improve relations and acquire the foreign aid it desperately needs. And, in meetings with South Korean and Japanese leaders, the North has made it clear that it wishes to reengage with the United States to discuss the normalization of relations between the two countries – another signal that North Korea may be ready to emerge from its isolation and become an active member of the international community.

South Korea: South Korea is actively engaged diplomatically and economically with the North. Following his inauguration in February 1998, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung implemented his "Sunshine Policy" in an effort to improve relations between North and South through business cooperation and investing. Under this initiative, a number of agreements were reached on cooperative ventures and over one hundred South Korean businesses are now producing goods in North Korea; inter-Korean trade was $222 million in 1998 and $330 million in 1999.[11] The Sunshine Policy cleared the way for a historic summit between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Jong Il in June 2000 in which both sides agreed to "ministerial-level talks, defense ministers talks on joint efforts to reconnect the Seoul-Shinuiju Railway, reunion of separated families, related Red Cross talks, cultural exchanges, and so forth." [12]

The agreements were unprecedented; however, the impact of the Sunshine Policy to bring about substantive improvements in North-South relations is debatable. Seven rounds of ministerial talks have failed to deliver much more than some family reunions. Military tensions remain high as evidenced by the June 2002 incident where North Korean naval ships fired on a South Korean frigate, killing five South Korean sailors.[13] Other reports indicate that the South Korean public believes the North has not given enough in return and is losing patience with the policy.[14]

In spite of these reports, it is evident that South Korea believes engagement is the best means of pursuing reunification, coaxing North Korea into the international community, and reducing the threat posed by the North's conventional forces and nuclear program. South Koreans fear that the hard-line policy outlined in President Bush's "axis of evil" State of the Union address may unravel all progress made to date and set

relations back to the pre-1994 Agreed Framework setting, driving North Korea back into isolation without safeguards or restraints on its nuclear and missile programs.[15] Any U.S. security policy will have to consider South Korea's national interest and work in concert with their policies if it is to achieve its objectives.

China, Russia, and Japan: All three countries support South Korea's engagement efforts, but for different reasons. China supports the peaceful reunification of Korea and will work toward that end keeping two objectives in mind: the removal of the U.S. military presence post-unification and a unified Korea that is China-oriented rather than Japan-oriented. China believes the South will dominate the unification process and, therefore, believes it important to develop better relations with South Korea.[16] This belief could constrain Chinese support of rogue-like behavior on the part of North Korea.

Russia hopes to benefit economically from South Korea's "Sunshine Policy" and has been a "major motivator" behind North Korea's decision to pursue reconnecting the inter-Korean railway, which would run from Seoul through the demilitarized zone, through Pyongyang, and on to the North Korean border with China. The Russians consider this connection vital to establishing their Trans-Siberian Railway, which would provide a major transshipment route for goods between East Asia and Europe.[17]

Japan's objectives are two-fold. The first is to reduce the threat posed to Japan by North Korea's ballistic missiles and the second is the repatriation of Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korea and the return of remains of those who died in North Korean custody, along with an explanation as to the cause of their deaths.[18]

Japan clearly supports engagement with North Korea, as evidenced by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's historic visit to Pyongyang in September 2002, where he apologized for Japan's treatment of Koreans during World War II. Even more startling was Kim Jong Il's admission that North Korea had abducted Japanese citizens in the past, some of whom are still in captivity. This act of contrition may be an indication of North Korea's desire to improve relations in order to acquire the foreign aid it so desperately needs.

V. National Interests and Objectives

North Korea threatens two vital interests of the United States. First, North Korea's nuclear capability, combined with a missile program that has potential for fielding long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles in the near future, threatens the physical security of the United States. North Korea has already demonstrated its ability to reach any target within South Korea and Japan with its Taepo-Dong 1 missile. The Taepo-Dong 2 missile, with an estimated range of 4000-6000 kilometers, was in development before the North Koreans voluntarily halted testing in 1999 and, should it become operational, could strike targets in the United States.[19] North Korea's willingness to export their missile technology and hardware to any nation or group with the hard currency to pay for it exacerbates this threat to U.S. security.

Second, hostilities within the region could threaten the economic security of the United States. According to a report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), trade between the United States and the East Asia region totals over $700 billion annually, approximately one-third of all United States trade. U.S. corporate investment in the region totals $200 billion, with a like amount invested in the United States by East

Asian interests. This trade and investment, totaling over $1 trillion annually, manifests itself in the form of millions of jobs for American citizens.[20] Stability within the East Asian region is essential to sustain prolonged economic growth and thus represents a vital interest to the United States.

To secure this vital interest, the United States should pursue four objectives: eliminating North Korea's nuclear weapons program through implementation of the 1994 Agreed Framework; halting further development and export of missile technology and hardware; supporting efforts for a peaceful reunification of North and South Korea; and, reducing the threat posed by North Korea's conventional forces massed along the 38th parallel.

VI. Strategic Analysis – Means

The United States has four traditional instruments of statecraft at hand to pursue its objectives: military, economic, diplomatic, and informational. The determination of the means the United States should use in order to achieve its objectives on the Korean peninsula is shaped by the availability of resources, prior resource decisions, and the current political will at home. In examining the resources, one has to consider not only the actual cost involved, but also the opportunity costs of using selected assets for this purpose as opposed to applying them elsewhere.

In terms of resources available, the United States has already made a significant investment militarily in the region, maintaining 37,000 forces in South Korea, including one Army infantry division and two Air Force fighter wings. In addition to these forces, the United States Navy operates the Pacific Fleet in the region and has a Marine Expeditionary Force stationed on Okinawa. The costs of employing military means may

be prohibitive given the extent of operations, both ongoing and planned, in the war on terrorism. Any additional funding, manpower, and materiel required for a military operation on the Korean peninsula could degrade the United States' ability to prosecute the war in Afghanistan or possible actions in Iraq, making the opportunity cost of this means too great.

Economically, the United States can use direct and indirect means, in either a positive or negative manner, to achieve its objectives directly through foreign aid and indirectly through business investments. Both of these means are positive measures, whereas economic sanctions would be a negative means. While both direct and indirect means are available, Congress has proven reluctant to provide substantial economic support or relief to North Korea and would be unlikely to do so in the future without conditions requiring verification of North Korea's compliance with concessions on their nuclear and missile programs.[21] Another Congressional constraint might be the means of funding an increase in foreign aid to North Korea. In the current fiscal environment, any increase would likely result in a corresponding decrease in other foreign aid programs and, given the poor history of results with North Korea, the benefit may not justify the cost.

The next means to consider is diplomacy. At the present time, the United States does not maintain any diplomatic, consular, or trade relations with North Korea.[22] However, establishing diplomatic contact with the DPRK is the logical first step in pursuing the political objectives and is one that can be accomplished with a relatively small expenditure of resources when compared to military and economic means. Although dealing with the North Koreans has been a frustrating experience, not dealing

with them could prove to be more dangerous if they continue to develop their missile and nuclear weapons programs, as evidenced by the recent revelation that North Korea has, in fact, been secretly working on a nuclear weapons capability.[23]

The final means available, informational, is least likely to succeed because of the North Korean government's near-total control of information. There are no North Korean Internet service providers and Internet access in North Korea is illegal, with only a small number of the regime's elite having access through links provided by China.[24] Even if it was not illegal, the lack of power, telephone lines, and computer hardware in the country makes it near impossible to reach the masses with any type of public diplomacy information campaign. Furthermore, the United States' influence through soft power is limited because there is no outlet for American goods and no possibility for cultural exchanges through foreign studies by North Korean students or business-to-business contacts between the two countries. The regime's stranglehold on all manner of contact with the rest of the world denies the United States the opportunity to use this means of statecraft.

VII. Strategic Analysis - Ways

According to Jane's Intelligence Digest, "…there seems to be a realization on the part of the communist leadership that if the regime or even the country itself is to survive, it has no alternative but to pursue at least an outwardly reformist and conciliatory approach. There is a sense of urgency in Pyongyang that measures are urgently needed to avoid further diplomatic isolation."[25] There are many combination of ways for the U.S. to apply its means in the pursuit of its political objectives; however, given the current international and domestic environment, a policy of aggressive economic and diplomatic

engagement to contain further development of the North Korean nuclear and missile programs, while continuing to deter North Korean military forces with strong forward presence, may work best.

The first step in engagement, as noted earlier, should be diplomatic. Not only must the United States continue its coordination with South Korea and Japan through the TCOG, it must also engage diplomatically with China to win Beijing's support and prevent it from undermining U.S. and allied efforts. U.S. diplomatic efforts with the Pyongyang government should establish and maintain a dialogue on the key issues of compliance with the terms of the 1994 Agreed Framework and halting the development and export of ballistic missile technology and hardware.

Diplomacy implies negotiations and North Korea has little to offer and much to gain, but that can work to the United States' advantage. North Korea lacks the resources required to help itself and desperately needs billions of dollars in international development aid and investment. This situation enhances the probability of success for the United States to achieve its political objectives through economic engagement. In addition to supporting South Korea's economic efforts through the Sunshine Policy, the United States should lift trade sanctions, except for those items that would contribute to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, in return for substantive concessions on the nuclear and missile issues. Thomas Henriksen writes in the Hoover Digest, "Ending economic sanctions against North Korea would be viewed not as a weakness but as the application of a different weapon. Economic engagement with a troublesome state is a longer-term strategy." [26]

The sanctions, imposed 50 years ago, have failed to bring about a regime change or alter North Korea's behavior and lifting them would not only nurture the embryonic economic development Kim Jong-Il has initiated, but also increase leverage for the United States in the future by threatening to reinstate sanctions. The expansion of a market economy would further support U.S. objectives by sparking additional societal changes, such as the introduction of information technology, and opening up possible avenues for Western influence to creep into North Korean society.

Another way to engage economically would be for the United States to support international efforts to relieve the famine afflicting the North Korean population. If the United States were to take the lead in removing conditions for humanitarian relief, it would enhance its prestige in the international community and generate goodwill that would be useful in future negotiations for desired policies. While famine relief may benefit the communist regime in the short-run, in the medium-to long-term it could seriously undermine the regime by demonstrating to the people how badly their leadership has failed them and how one of the country's purported "worst enemies" is, in fact, one of its saviors.[27]

There are several obstacles that could prevent this policy from succeeding. First, lack of support from the U.S. Congress could deny the administration any of the carrots it needs to gain negotiating leverage with the North Koreans. Second, failure of the United States to gain the support of regional allies will undermine engagement efforts and could offer North Korea an opening to exploit differences between the United States and South Korea on economic and security issues. Finally, North Korea could simply refuse to provide any meaningful transparency or reciprocity during negotiations; demanding all,

but giving nothing. With a Republican-controlled House and a one-vote minority in the Senate, it is likely the President could garner the required Congressional support for this policy. Likewise, Japan and South Korea prefer engagement and, since this policy is in line with their own objectives, are likely to support U.S. efforts.[28] That leaves the issue of how to deal with North Korea if diplomacy and engagement fail.

VIII. Military Intervention as a Strategic Alternative

The history between the United States and North Korea on engagement and negotiation is checkered, at best. Chuck Downs, Former Senior Defense and Foreign Policy Advisor for the Republican Policy Committee, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee characterized North Korea's negotiating strategy as follows, "it has repeatedly initiated negotiation by appearing to be open to fundamental changes in its policies, used its willingness to participate in talks to demand preconditions, benefits, and concessions, and terminated discussions when it has gained maximum advantage, blaming the lack of agreement on the other side of the table."[29]

Their history of negotiating in bad faith coupled with the recent admission that they have secretly pursued a nuclear weapons development program and that they have "built more powerful weapons," interpreted to mean chemical and or biological weapons, warrants consideration of a military alternative against North Korea.[30] The following analysis will use the military strategic framework to examine the feasibility of employing military force to achieve the United States' political objectives.

Political Setting and Objectives: The political objectives of the United States remain unchanged by North Korea's admission of pursuing a nuclear weapons program, but the admission does increase the sense of urgency on the part of the United States and

its allies to act quickly and decisively to counter this threat to regional stability. The political setting within the United States is conducive to supporting military action. This is evidenced by the recent Congressional action passing resolutions allowing the President to use military force in Iraq if necessary to eliminate the threat posed by a recalcitrant regime suspected of possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). If the Congress is willing to support military action against a regime that is suspected of possessing WMD, one could argue that it would not hesitate to support action against a regime that is known to possess WMD. Furthermore, the Congress has long been suspect of North Korea's honesty and frustrated by its one step forward, two steps backward approach to negotiations, which could build support for a military option.

Military Objectives: North Korea's primary objective for developing nuclear weapons and a ballistic missile capability is to secure their survival – to deter an attack from United States and South Korean forces. North Korea believes the objective of the United States is to forcibly reunify Korea under control of the Southern government and it fears an attack because it can no longer count on military support from its former allies; Moscow terminated its security treaty with Pyongyang and Beijing, while committed to North Korea's security on paper, has established extensive trade and investment links with South Korea.[31] Although outnumbering U.S. and ROK forces by a ratio of almost 3 to 1, the DPRK fears technological superiority in air and naval forces gives the allies a decided advantage and, thus, has pursued WMD as a means to overcome the inequality in the balance of power.

North Korea's possession of WMD and the capability to deliver them is a trump card it can use to exploit and extort concessions from the international community

without having to make substantive changes in its governance. These weapons threaten not only the peace and stability in the entire region, but also the physical and economic security of the United States. Remove this threat and the North Koreans are left with little to bargain with. Its conventional forces, while substantial in size, are limited in capability and the country possesses no resources upon which the world depends. Therefore, the North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missile capability are the centers of gravity against which the United States should devote all of its energies. As defined by Clausewitz, the center of gravity is, "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."[32] Destroying these capabilities would eliminate the leverage of security and balance of power the Pyongyang government now relies on for negotiating power and force the communist regime to alter its behavior, thereby enabling the United States to achieve its political objectives.

Military Strategic Setting: The United States faces several constraints in undertaking military action against North Korea. First, it cannot go it alone; a coalition with its regional allies is imperative to have any chance of success. Second, as noted previously, external military support to North Korea from Russia and China is suspect and military action by a United States-led coalition would have to be based on the assumption that diplomatic engagement with Russia and China would keep them from entering the conflict. Third, the United States is already committed to military operations in Afghanistan and is building up forces in that region for a possible conflict with Iraq, which will limit the forces and equipment available for a Korean strike. This is especially critical if North Korean conventional forces move south. Finally, the nature of

the targets themselves (dug-in or underground launch sites, gun emplacements, and production facilities), make them difficult to detect, much less destroy.[33]

Strategic Concept: There is any number of means of military power and ways to employ it to achieve the objectives stated above. However, any military action initiated by the United States should be multi-lateral in nature, with the support of South Korea and Japan. Given the limited nature of the military objectives, the strategy should focus on a limited, conventional, attack by air and naval forces to destroy the North's WMD capabilities and prohibit further development and export of ballistic missile technologies and hardware.

The strategic concept is to use ground and sea-based air assets in concert with air and sea-launched cruise missiles to attack and destroy weapons production facilities and missile launch sites, while using conventional ground forces and air support to contain any North Korean advance south of the DMZ. Priority of objectives in order will be the North Korean air and air defense forces, then missile launch sites, followed by nuclear weapons facilities. Naval forces will blockade North Korean ports to prevent the export of missile hardware or import of military support from external sources. Strategic air assets will attack North Korean artillery emplacements and troop formations along the Demilitarized Zone to support coalition forces in their defense against a ground attack. The coalition must execute the air attacks on a massive scale and without warning in order to cripple the North Korean's offensive capability and disrupt command and control.

Potential Results: If the air and missile attacks are successful, the destruction of North Korea's WMD capability could occur in a matter of weeks and the coalition would

then focus all of its energies on the destruction of the enemy's conventional forces, forcing the North Korean leadership to return to the negotiating table with little choice but to abide by coalition terms. The TCOG, with the United States in the lead, would set conditions conducive to a transformation of the North Korean government, offering economic aid, famine relief, and a pledge to assist building the public infrastructure needed for to promote greater economic growth and self sufficiency. A secondary effect of a successful military intervention would be a reduced threat posed by North Korea, allowing the United States to reduce its military presence on the peninsula and shift those forces to other theaters in support of the war on terrorism.

The principal risk with this strategy is that it requires the United States to fight a two-front war, which would almost certainly impede operations in the war on terrorism by drawing resources from the other active theaters. North Korea will almost certainly retaliate with an attack on Seoul and, although U.S. and South Korean forces would most likely contain the advance north of the city, the cost would be measured in tens of thousands of casualties and millions of refugees.[34] Operational risks include the failure to achieve strategic surprise, failure to destroy the North's offensive ballistic missile capability, and becoming enmeshed in a protracted ground war.

IX. Conclusion

The risks that accompany the employment of military means to achieve the United States' national security objectives significantly exceed the risks associated with engagement. The cost of the military alternative, in terms of manpower and materiel, would be significant. However, the cost of failure would be even greater. If North Korea retained its WMD capability and used it against economic centers in the region, it could

jeopardize the entire trade picture, destabilizing the economies of the United States, South Korea, and Japan. And, if the conflict escalated into a full-scale conventional war, it would require significantly more resources than those already devoted to the region to reestablish the balance of power in the United States' favor. Any of these conditions would prevent the United States from achieving its political objectives and leave the region in turmoil, continuing to threaten national security.

The South Korean, Japanese, and Chinese governments support engagement and the TCOG is already in place to coordinate an integrated policy; it is doubtful they would support a preemptive attack.[35] Therefore, the United States should pursue a multi-lateral strategy of aggressive engagement with North Korea, using the leverage provided by that country's desperate economic situation and humanitarian crisis to negotiate an agreement that would eliminate its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

Aggressive engagement provides the DPRK with the incentives, means and opportunity to abandon its nuclear and missile programs and transform itself into a viable member of the international community or face the consequences of further isolation and deprivation. In essence, it sets the stage where today's carrots will become tomorrow's sticks.

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